

Plague

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Summary: When you live in a wasteland, it's very easy to underestimate the severity of the situation. Hiccup, Snotlout, Tuffnut, and Fishlegs figure this out the hard way. **RATED M FOR EXTREME GORE.**

Plague

**\*\*Hey, guys!\*\***

**\*\*I've been incredibly stressed lately, and I'd rather take it out on fictional characters than real people. Things have been getting better for me, though.\*\***

**\*\*This is also my second horror attempt. I'm not sure if it technically fits in this genre, but I would think that what happens is horrifying enough.\*\***

**\*\*Sorry if there are grammar/characterization issues. I don't really want to slave over this, and I think it's best as it is 'raw'.\*\***

**\*\*WARNING: This is rated M FOR A REASON. There are VERY graphic scenes ahead and I did **\*\*\_\*\*not \_\*\*hold back. If you are either under the age of fourteen or very sensitive to gore and depressing atmospheres, I strongly suggest that you do not read this. Take my word for this; even I feel a little down re-reading this oneshot, and I **\*\*\_\*\*never \_\*\*feel that way when I reread my own work.\*\*******

**\* \* \***

><p>"<em>Go."<em>

"\_N-no! I \_won't! \_We can't justâ€"\_"\_

"\_Damn it, Hiccup! Leave before it's too late!"\_

The former heir of Berk gritted his teeth, tears streaming down his cheeks and whipping behind him with the wind. He sniffled and rubbed his eyes, careful not to disturb his dragon's flying mechanism. A bolt was loose, and even the slightest of jostling would cause the delicate contraption to fail and send the two plummeting into the rapidly-crashing waves below. Luckily, they had someone to catch them if that were to happen.

Which it would.

It had happened twice already.

The only three people who could comfort him said nothing. Snotlout was exhausted, having just fought off a viscously territorial sea serpent with Fireworm. His Monstrous Nightmare had a nasty rip in her wings, blood oozing out and slowly tearing it apart. This was bad; if they fell, she wouldn't be able to catch them again. Fishlegs was having trouble keeping his beloved Gronckle from passing out midflight, the dragoness had been so badly cut by a thrown spike. Tuffnut, besides sitting right behind Hiccup and hanging onto him, only squeezed his arms around the skinnier boy in a half-hearted hug and rested his cheek on his shoulder.

Toothless stalled for a split second, gasping for air and struggling to keep his eyes open. They'd been flying nonstop for hours. He was going to fall soon if they didn't find any land.

They continued on in silence.

The sea was never-ending, a vast expanse of blue, blue, blue, heaving on itself with different shades of the same color. Even the heavy clouds above, just light enough to give the tiny group hope that it would not rain, seemed to be tinted with the infuriating color. It was all he could see. Such a shame that a generally welcoming hue, especially to a tribe centered on sailing and fishing, would become more similar to a metaphor of death than anything else. They needed land, and they needed it now.

A sharp clap! rung through the air as Snotlout closed his telescope, pushing both ends together. He turned around to face Hiccup (and presumably Tuffnut and Fishlegs). "There's some land about an hour or two's flight out. My map says it's supposed to be inhabited by some colony of people from far away." His voice was low, barely audible. It was scratchy and layered with grief.

"Is there any smoke coming from it?" Fishlegs said mechanically.

"No."

Hiccup shut his eyes and took in a deep, shuddering breath. Toothless, the only dragon present that could even partially understand what was being said, let out a grainy moan. The Night Fury had learned that the words "smoke" and "yes" put together meant good, and "smoke" and "no" meant

What did it matter? They needed rest. All of them.

The impromptu leader of the group allowed himself to see the world

around him again, taking it all in. Tuffnut had started to cry, tears silently drifting from his eyes and away. Fishlegs was nursing a wound, a grim expression set on his face. Snotlout gave a short wave, pressing Hiccup on to decide whether to land on the island or to leave it altogether. It was hard to decide, just like it was hard to keep up any hope.

"Iâ€| Hiccup glanced off into the distance. The island was coming into view along with several other smaller islands that gravitated around it. "â€|our dragons need rest. We'll stop there and leave as soon as we can," he sighed, hunching over and staring at his frostbitten fingers.

For the first time that day, Tuffnut spoke up. "Are you sure?"

Without looking behind him, Hiccup nodded. Tuffnut said nothing. He'd been very quiet ever since he'd found Ruffnut and gotten swept up in the ensuing panic of their once-slightly-larger group. She hadn't even been buried.

The teenager let out another sigh. He no longer blamed himself for all of this; he'd come to realize that it would have happened even if he hadn't brought them back to the Northern Islands, as the natives of the southern lands had commented that they were spreading out of control. What he did blame himself for, though, was ignoring the hysteria of all the villages when he brought one of them into it. He should have known better than that. But he'd thought it was a myth, only wearing special gloves to humor the natives, even when a few hitched a ride on the ships to make sure they knew what happened to them. That single act should have told him everything.

"Bug-sized crittersâ€|" he mumbled, green eyes drooping. Tuffnut's crying merged to sobbing.

The tailfin failed.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup yelped and grabbed his hand when pain sprung up from it, having accidentally struck himself with the flint stones. He brought his bruised appendage to his mouth, knowing it wouldn't help ease the pain but doing it out of habit. Fishlegs bent down, and with a few strikes, had a pitiful fire going. It crackled weakly, an off, muted glow surrounding it.<p>

Both eighteen-year-olds stared at the little orange flame. They needed warmth to get through the nightâ€|but if their suspicions were correct, then it would be a death sentence. Unsurprisingly, Hiccup had been the one to make the life-or-death decision for the entire posse. Again.

The soft crunching of leaves and twigs announced Snotlout and Tuffnut's return. The latter with a large pile of firewood, and the former carrying what looked like a canine of sorts. They'd somehow have to split that up between four humans and three dragons.

Hiccup opened his mouth to suggest that someone and their dragon go huntingâ€|and shut it. Once glance at the sleeping reptiles and he

knew that they needed as much rest as he could. And, to be completely honest with himself, he knew that he'd rather be asleep than live in the waking world. He hoped that they were having nice dreams, at least.

Tuffnut let the firewood drop in an unorganized heap and stumbled next to Fishlegs, gingerly holding his hands out to the flame. Snotlout settled onto the ground next to Hiccup and quietly asked him to help him skin it.

As they worked, Hiccup whispered, "I think we should give this to Tuffnut."

Snotlout's blue eyes flicked briefly in surprise. Then understanding. "You're right." Neither of them had to say the rest—that the twin had lost an alarming amount of weight and was already skinnier than Hiccup was—especially when the person in question was drifting off to sleep right next to them. Fishlegs had taken off his precious vest and given it to the blonde, one arm around him and frowning worriedly.

By the time the skinning had been finished, Fishlegs' dragon, Little Clubber, had moved over and sat behind them, providing warmth and begging to take the meat for herself. A growl from Fireworm had her backing off, eyeing the scrawny meal sorrowfully. Hiccup found himself relating to her when they began to cook it over the fire.

"Well, at least it isn't raw this time," he tried to strike up a conversation with anyone, desperately clutching to any positive topic he could find. "I was getting tired of having to-go fish."

Snotlout grunted. "Yeah. At least we had plenty of fish then. And this smell is going to attract a whole world of trouble!"

Slumping, Hiccup gave up his short-lived battle. "We can always have Toothless shoot at any invaders!"

"You know that's not what he's talking about, Hiccup," Fishlegs spoke up, voice still blank and hollow. He shivered slightly and leaned onto Little Clubber, who had settled besides him. She licked him and rested her gigantic head next to him, effectively wrapping the Viking up in a semicircle of scales.

The bronze-haired boy nodded solemnly. "Sorry," he murmured.

Throughout dinner and the night, nothing eventful or noteworthy happened. The runaways split the dog, everyone only getting a mere mouthful since the dragons needed more food, and then allowed themselves to sleep for a bit. A storm loomed ahead, washing away any thoughts of flying off the island with the rain it brought. Hiccup and the others were forced to take refuge in a cave.

Even after the rain lessened, they still couldn't leave. The dragons were too weak. Toothless collapsed when Hiccup jumped up onto his neck, begging for more rest. He had to make the decision to stay.

Fishlegs wouldn't stop muttering to himself and checking his clothing and legs every couple seconds. Tuffnut and Snotlout were seated between Fireworm's spikes, grateful for the dragoness' kindness. Even she, the strongest of all the dragons, was tired, but that wouldn't stop her from helping her human companions. She had set fire to the ground below her and heat was radiating from the scorched coals.

As the night grew still and dead, all of them were forced to huddle to keep warm. Hiccup fell asleep to the sound of soft skitterings on the cavern floor.

\* \* \*

><p>The group awoke to a nice, damp, absurdly cold morning the next day. Hiccup was the first up, as always.<p>

Closing his eyes and stretching, he groaned slightly while his back popped. Somewhat satisfied, Hiccup began to make his way out from over Snotlout's arm, under Toothless' wing and Fireworm's tail, and off of Little Clubber's head. He had no idea how he'd managed to sleep in that position for so many hours.

A small smile graced the young adult's face. He'd somehow managed to make his way through the giant pile of bodies without waking anyone up. If only the sunlight were streaming in, and then this morning could actually be considered a good one. Instead, a dim, pale glow just barely reached the cave's mouth, the sun blocked out by a heavy cloud cover. Hiccup shuddered, holding his skinny, fragile arms in close in a vain effort to keep warm.

Stepping out of the cave was no help; it was arguably colder outside, anyways. Disheartened, Hiccup turned around, throwing away any ideas of going out on a solo hunting trip. He'd make a stupid mistake when he was cold, distressed, and starving. That would be a waste of precious energyâ€”better to just go back inside the cave and wait for the others.

Too bad he tripped over a rock when he was walking back. Hiccup scrambled to right himself, falling in the process and hitting his metal leg against the side of the cave. A deafening, shrill \_CLING!\_ echoed throughout the cave, gradually becoming quieter and showing just \_how \_deep their temporary home really was. The brown-haired boy fell over and grasped the tip of his knee, clenching his teeth and hissing loudly in pain.

In seconds everyone was awake and on their feet. Toothless ran over to Hiccup and let his best friend lean on him, sniffing his leg worriedly. Still gasping, he patted the dragon's head in reassurance, slowly crawling to his feet.

"You okay?" Snotlout asked, walking over to inspect his cousin's leg. Hiccup nodded sheepishly. With a sigh, he said, "Hiccup, you really need to be careful. You'llâ€”"

\_Skit skit skit. Skit skit skit  
skit-skit-SKIT-SKIT-SKIT-SKIT-SKITâ€”\_

All the dragons' heads jerked up towards the depths of cave, each letting loose a snarl of varying degrees. Little glowing ballsâ€”eyes, Hiccup knewâ€”began to appear in the sheer blackness,

rising in number until it looked like there was a wave of them churning towards the weakened group. Little clicks and chirps could be heard, but above all was that terrible skittering, the sound of thousands of tiny, clawed feet pounding the ground with excitement, chasing the kill.

"\_PLAGUE BRINGERS!\_" Tuffnut screeched. As if breaking a spell on the humans and dragons, all of them turned at once and ran for their lives. Fireworm set fire to the entire floor, wall, and ceiling of the cave, the corrosive fire sticking like glue. It was a feeble attempt to protect them.

Despite his weariness, Toothless ducked under his human and scooped him onto his back, running ahead of the others and leading them out and away. Little Clubber could be heard groaning and taking off the ground, Fishlegs shouting encouragement. Looking over his shoulder, Hiccup could see Fireworm snaking around the trees, quickly keeping pace with Toothless and surpassing him. Snotlout was riding her back, while Tuffnut and Fishlegs were on the Gronckle.

Behind them, a sea of brownish-green dragons spilled out of the cave, taking to the air like a flock of bats and chasing after them.

"Go! Go! \_Go!\_" Hiccup cried, leaning forward on Toothless. He forced himself to look away from the devils, heart racing and body trembling in fear. Snotlout was shouting the same exact orders, his voice hysterical and panicked. Fishlegs began to scream to them the closest route to the ocean. Tuffnut was the only person who was silent.

Toothless jumped once, yelped, and fell flat on the ground. He was too weak to fly. They were reduced to running.

Death was playing with them.

Little Clubber managed to catch up, but failed to gain altitude, flying a little higher than Fireworm's full height. Her wound from last night reopened and spilled blood all over the ground, leaving a bright red path for the Plague Bringers to follow. At the scent of it, there was a collective squeal from them, and they impossibly began to speed up.

Hiccup swayed under the terror. He felt like he was stuck in a dream, waiting to be awoken. He knew it would never happen.

"There's a river ahead!" Snotlout suddenly screamed. "Hurry! Hurry!"

Fireworm jumped and was airborne, dashing ahead and out of the forest. Little Clubber struggled to catch up, unsure if she wanted to leave Toothless or not. The Night Fury jerked his head and snorted. His draconic friend squeaked once and pawed at the air, but the more dominant of the two repeated his order. Letting out a sorrowful wail, the Gronckle pushed herself to her limits, eventually moving out of sight. Hiccup thought he saw a brown-green blur fly onto her, but he knew the demons couldn't have caught up \_that \_fast. It must have been a falling leaf.

"C'mon, buddy!" He encouraged, gripping his saddle until his fingers went numb. "You can do it!"

Toothless barked in response, arching his neck and charging, wings pinned to his side and tail held out straight. They leaped over a bush, around a gigantic pine tree, and through a ravine. Then they went into a clearing.

Hiccup felt like crying. There was the river! And it led right out to the ocean!

His Night Fury never let his pace falter, running right into the water and turning with the current. Little Clubber hovered over them, blood dripping wetly into the river and painting it a deep crimson. Fireworm swam like a sea serpent with Snotlout on her head.

The mass of Plague Bringers, looking more like the mists of death, faltered at the sight of their worst enemy. Then they sped up in an attempt to catch the survivors before they reached the sea.

Hiccup gulped. "You know what to do, Toothless!" He took in a deep breath and squeezed his eyes shut. His best friend dove underwater and the current swept them up, much faster than any running could ever achieve. All sound evaporated, replaced by the soothing rush of water.

The cold constricted Hiccup's chest and he fought to keep from sucking in water. When he opened his eyes, all he could see was a plethora of grays and blues. Some bright red stood stark against the dreary conditions, reminding him of Little Clubber's bleeding, chest-deep slice across her side. He prayed to Thor that she would survive. Something told him that the chances of that were slim.

The gray around him suddenly disappeared and was replaced by an endless expanse of blue. Hiccup grabbed Toothless' ear, vision darkening. He needed air \_now!\_

The two surfaced just in time. Hiccup gulped in air, floating off of his dragon's back and treading water. He had lost all feeling in his arms and leg. At least they were incredibly south of Berk; the water was much warmer. If he got out quickly and was lucky, he could probably avoid hypothermia together. Unfortunately, luck was not on his side. Ever.

Little Clubber had fallen into the water and was being held up by one of Fireworm's wings. The Monstrous Nightmare in question was heaving, barely able to keep afloat.

The solid block of devils loomed on the bank of the river. They didn't dare go out to the ocean.

All at once, they turned and flew away. Once they were out of sight, the dragons began to carry their beloved friends back to the bank. Nobody said anything, too out of breath and frightened to utter a word.

Hiccup dropped to his feet and let Toothless wrap his paws and wings around him, leaning into the warmth. The ground was squishy and wet underneath him, but he didn't care. He was just thankful for all of them to be alive.

Little Clubber plopped to the ground and rolled over. Fishlegs and

Tuffnut leaped off of her just in time, the former rushing to her side and desperately trying to stop the bloodflow. The dragon's entire side was covered in red. In pulses the blood would squirt out and everywhere, then ebb to a steady flow, and then rush again in time with her frantic little heartbeat.

Snotlout sat down next to Hiccup and they hugged each other tightly, burying each others' faces into their necks. Hiccup couldn't stop shivering.

"Fireworm," Snotlout spoke up, voice harsh and raggedy. "Fire."

The massive dragon growled in response, confused, but didn't disobey. She turned to the poor, dying Gronckle and nudged Fishlegs away from her. Then she took in a deep breath and engulfed Little Clubber in flames. The dragon howled in agony. The fire seeped into her wounds, burning the flesh and scales black and causing them to twist up on themselves. The edges of the otherwise-fatal scratch began to grow and expand under the extreme heat, skin slowly melting together and merging like glue. Bubbles grew out from the unprofessional treatment, air getting trapped under the skin. Blisters were abundant.

When Fireworm finished and stepped back groggily, Little Clubber had stopped screaming. She was unconscious. Her scrape was now a thick, red-and-black mass of lumpy skin. It almost looked like it was boiling; the air bubbles that had formed were starting to pop. In turn, the blisters became more irritated, deepening in color and burning from the high temperature of the melted skin.

Fishlegs fell to his knees, shoulders shaking, head bowed. He was trying so hard not to cry.

Hiccup felt nauseous. He turned away, leaning his head on Snotlout's shoulder. "At least she isn't bleeding anymore!" he whispered. The cauterizing had at least done that.

"!yeah!" Snotlout's voice was tiny. He seemed unable to take his eyes off of what he'd just forced his dragon to do. Toothless seemed to be trying to comfort Fireworm, letting her lay her head on his paws and gently running his tongue over her. Both dragons were forcing themselves to look anywhere but at Little Clubber. The Gronckle's breathing was shaky and uneven, and she would twitch in random intervals. It was impossible to tell the color of her hide; it was either blackened or covered in her own blood.

Fireworm would never be able to forgive herself. Hiccup knew this, watching the distraught Nightmare begin to do the dragon equivalent of crying. She, too, was trying to not make a big deal of herself, trying to conceal her emotions for the rest of the group. Hiccup nudged his cousin, and he shakily got up and hugged Fireworm tightly around the head. The dragon wailed.

This can't be much worse, Hiccup moaned to himself. He closed his eyes and leaned back onto Toothless, shuddering.

Tuffnut screamed.

The leader of the group sat upright, locking his gaze onto the blonde. Tuffnut was staring in horror at something that was on his



arm. It took Hiccup a few seconds to realize what it was; his mind had shut down at the first sight of it, and he couldn't help but freeze on the spot, wishing that he could just die right then and there instead of enduring this suffering once more.

A Plague Bringer had somehow latched onto Tuffnut. It had bitten him.

Tuffnut grabbed the evil monster from his arm, threw it to the ground, and stomped on it. It couldn't even let out a sound. A sickening \_crunch \_came from its little body and blood flew everywhere. It was useless. Even if it hadn't bitten him, the act of it merely touching him with its poisonous skin would have doomed him anyways.

Already, the area that Tuffnut had been bitten was turning blackish-green. It slowly rose in all directions up and down his forearm. His eyes were losing color, the irises started to change to a pale, whitish gray. Blood was beginning to run from them like tears, streaks of life rushing down his cheeks. Tuffnut coughed violently, covering his face. All strength seemed to flow out of him, drifting away like steam. He fell to his knees and shuddered, hugging himself tightly.

The teenager looked up at Hiccup, eyes wide and glistening, every color sapped away besides the pupils. All of this happened in seconds, providing no proper time for reaction. One minute, Tuffnut was staring at Hiccup, utterly terrified and desperately clinging to hope that the Viking prodigy could save him, and the nextâ€|

The terrible noise of a Night Fury's fire filled the soundless environment. Hiccup had barely turned to his dragon when the equally-scared animal let loose his supersonic fireblast, hitting Tuffnut point-blank in the chest.

Hiccup saw the explosion a split second before he heard it. Then he was blinded by the remains of the body rocketing in all directions. His former friend seemed to evaporate into thin air, tinting the area pink and leaving a gut-wrenching, acidic smell behind. Blood splattered everywhere. Something wet and slimy hit Hiccup in the face, and when he immediately yanked it off to examine it, he was greeted with the sight ofâ€|\_something. \_It was pale, like the skin of a dead person, and red veins were bulging out of it. Something yellow was dripping out of it. Hiccup dropped it and stumbled backwards, barely keeping from tripping. Directly afterwards, what appeared to be stomach lining hit him in the chest. And then an impossible amount of blood that stung his eyes and filled his mouth and nose. He managed to clear his vision just in time to see a long, thin chunk of flesh smack Toothless in the face, to which the dragon howled and spooked at.

Vikings were savages of the sea, the people that even pirates quaked in fear from. But this was something that no human or dragon should ever have to deal with seeing, much less experiencing, mere feet from the incident. Hiccup spun on his heel and retched into the river, emptying the feeble amount of food out of his body and then proceeding to dry-heave. He noticed that someone was screaming in the background and ignored it, unable to come to terms to what the hell had just happened.

A hand floated past him in the murky, red-tinged water, still trying to clutch at something nonexistent, tendons and muscle fibers trailing behind it like demented party streamers. Hiccup began to dry-heave again.

\_Whatâ€|whatâ€|whatâ€|\_ He couldn't get his thoughts together.  
\_â€|why!\_

Toothless would have shot at the Plague Bringer earlier, not just after Tuffnut killed it. So he went deliberately out of his way to attack Tuffnut. Hiccup didn't know why; to him, it seemed like his normally-kind pet had suddenly turned into a cold-blooded murderer. He couldn't possibly have known that his Night Fury had just saved his life by getting rid of the infected before it became contagious. True, Hiccup knew that Tuffnut would very quickly deteriorate into a walking death-bringer within hours, but it would have never crossed his mind to actually \_kill \_the boy.

Someone grabbed him and hauled him to his feet, followed by another person. Fishlegs and Snotlout pulled Hiccup into a group hug, none of them able to keep calm and all of them in hysterics.

When Toothless nudged him in the back, looking either for comfort or to comfort, Hiccup rounded on him. "\_Why?\_" He shrieked, causing the black dragon to shrink back in surprise, ears pinned against his head. "\_Why would you do that? \_You \_never \_kill someone! \_Ever!\_" His Night Fury was uncomprehending, aghast and upset at his friend's random outburst. He simplified it, shouting, "\_Bad!\_"

This word, being something Toothless only connected to awful things, seemed to smack him across the face. His eyes widened and his ears stood up. He shrunk back, half-crouching in submission, and let a confused, apologetic croon escape him.

Something inside Hiccup snapped. "NO!" He screeched, breaking away from the silent Fishlegs and Snoutlout in favor of stomping over to the dragon. The teenager stood over Toothless, not processing that said animal was lying on the ground and begging for mercy. "You don't get off that easy! You can't just kill one of my \_best friends \_and expect things to be okay! How \_dare\_ you! Bad! Bad dragon!  
Baâ€""

"Hiccup! Stop!" Fishlegs sobbed, grabbing his arm and pulling him back. He hugged him tightly, even when his friend struggled against his grip to continue beating his dragon down. "This isn't youâ€|" this came out as a choked moan.

Toothless ran away, running past the two and towards Snotlout. Hiccup's cousin had enough sense in him to realize that if he didn't calm the Night Fury down, then he would be lost on them forever. He embraced both Toothless and Fireworm, burdened with the tasks of keeping both animals calm when it would normally take all fourâ€|no, threeâ€|of them to.

Hiccup just watched them, his anger fading away into sorrow. He collapsed to his knees and bent over, forehead dropping to the ground. Shivering in both cold and agony, he whispered, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry."

He kept this mantra up until someone made the decision to move on.

Once that happened, Hiccup got up and blankly followed whoever was in the lead, lagging behind even Little Clubber. He didn't wake up until the next morning.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup patted Toothless gently on the head, rubbing the tiny line of spikes that ran up the center of his forehead. The Night Fury stared up at him warmly, licking him in the face to show his forgiveness. Closing his eyes, the Viking leaned his head on his dragon's neck, hugging him tightly. <em>I wish we could stay like this forever.<em>

He didn't stir even when he heard someone approaching.

"Are you awake?" It was Snotlout.

"I wish I wasn't," Hiccup murmured, squinting up at his only remaining relative. It was the expression on Snotlout's face that made him sit up in alarm. "Oh, no. \_No. \_Not her, too!" Toothless raised his head up and lowered his eyebrows, immediately sensing the solemn air about him.

Snotlout held his elbow in one hand, staring at his feet. He nodded once. "It wasâ€|too much. That wound was deep and the fire must have burned her organs before it closed upâ€|" His breath caught and he fell silent.

Hiccup had hugged him faster than he thought physically possible. "It's not your fault." \_I'm not going to let you make the same mistake as I did\_, he added internally. Having one person in the group beat themselves up for a death was enough. But not two. And \_definitely \_not Snotlout, who would rip himself to shreds and never recover.

"I know," Snotlout whimpered. "Iâ€|Fishlegs needs us." He suddenly let go of Hiccup, wiped his eyes, and began to back up and walk away. The other two followed in silence.

"I'm just glad he got to say goodbye."

Hiccup could only nod.

\_Have we vanished?\_

\* \* \*

><p>"Guys!" Fishlegs began to shriek. He was standing over their food supply, something they had managed to scavenge from the remains of the village that they had found. Hiccup and Snotlout had been working on fixing Toothless' tailfin, but at the tone of voice, they dropped everything and sprinted.<p>

The once-obese Viking pointed wordlessly at all of their food that they had recklessly plopped in one spot. The food that was reserved for the dragons so that they could fly out of there as soon as possible. Their one source of hope.

Several Plague Bringers had decided to make every basket one of their nests.

"No!" Hiccup whispered. "no, no, oh \_gods\_, no, no, no!" His face wrinkled up and he held his hands in front of him, fingers imitating claws before he clasped them around his head and began to walk in circle. "That was our \_only way out!\_"

Snotlout dropped the tool he had been using and gaped at the baskets. Fireworm appeared besides him and tensed every single muscle in her body.

"Oh gods! Oh gods!" Hiccup wailed. "That was our last chance!" He covered his face, crying out wordlessly. One could easily see him crack under the pressure during his complete meltdown. Toothless grabbed him and dragged him away, where the boy's screams could still easily be heard.

Fishlegs watched the spot the two had exited for awhile. Then he turned to Snotlout and nodded.

Fireworm torched their sole food supply.

\* \* \*

><p>Snotlout, Fishlegs, and Hiccup stood on a cliff, staring out at the ocean. The waves sprang up at them viciously, hoping to drag them down.<p>

"It's time to go," Hiccup said monotonously. Toothless pawed at the ground in a false act of bravery. Fishlegs and Snotlout exchanged worried glances. Ever since the food incident, the smallest of the three had been acting dysfunctional. He seemed to be trying his best to cope, but he obviously had a lot to recover from. And he wasn't doing it fast enough in the harsh world they were living it.

"We're going to live," Snotlout announced. Fireworm shot a blast of fire into the air in agreement.

"We have no choice." This time it was Fishlegs who spoke up. "For Astrid and for Tuffnut."

"For everyone," Hiccup barely managed to say, voice unable to be heard over the sea. He stared straight ahead. Then he clicked his tongue twice, and Toothless launched into the air. Fireworm was quick to follow.

Snotlout, Fishlegs, and Hiccup disappeared from the far north, never to be seen again. Whether they survived long enough for the cure is unknown.

End  
file.